

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The helium and/or hydrogen gas with which the silica gel is contacted preferably is a helium/ mixed gas containing up to 4% hydrogen. Especially preferably, the silica gel is contacted with pure helium gas. Any desired method may be used for contacting with helium and/or hydrogen gas. Examples thereof include a method in which the gas is passed through the ~~synthetic quartz powder~~ silica gel and a method in which the ~~powder~~ silica gel is enclosed in a container together with helium and/or hydrogen gas and held therein in an atmosphere of helium and/or hydrogen gas at ordinary or an elevated pressure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Into a mixing vessel were introduced tetramethoxysilane and water. The amount of the water was 5 equivalents to the silane. The contents were stirred at a temperature of 30°C for 1 hour to obtain a homogeneous sol solution through a hydrolysis reaction. This solution was transferred to a vat made of ~~vinyl chloride~~ poly(vinyl chloride) and allowed to stand for 5 hours to cause it to gel. This gel was dried for 12 hours with a 140°C vacuum dryer and then subjected to particle size regulation so as to result in an average particle diameter of 320 μm .

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 20, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Gases are discharged from the ampuls to give peaks. The gases generated were determined from the areas of the resultant peaks based on ~~the relative sensitivities to the~~ relative sensitivity ratios to the peaks for standard substances or standard gases.